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The Star-Ledger

How to stay in shape when stuck at home. In Ticket

THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Tragedy strikes 4 times for N.J. family

Four members of the Fusco family have died as the coronavirus continues to spread. Three died at CentraState Medical Center, above. More than 20 members of the Freehold-based family are in quarantine. *Patti Sapone, for The Star-Ledger*

‘Everything is on hold’: Family unable to bury loved ones lost to coronavirus

Spencer Kent *For The Star-Ledger*

There was pain in her voice. Pain and exasperation.

Roseann Paradiso Fodera is in mourning and unable to bury her family’s dead.

Her cousin, Rita Fusco-Jackson, 55, of Freehold, died last Friday, later testing positive for COVID-19. She was the state’s second fatality in the pandemic.

Since then, three other members of the Fusco family have died, ravaged by the coronavirus. At least three more remain infected. Two are in critical condition.

The rest are devastated and left with questions no one can answer.

With more than 20 members of the Freehold-based family in quarantine and the state’s social distancing policy prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 people, they are forbidden from even holding funerals.

“Everything is on hold,” said Paradiso Fodera, a cousin and the lawyer representing the Fusco family.

Everything will continue to be on hold until the coronavirus pandemic ebbs. But right now, it is showing no signs of abating.

Paradiso Fodera, from Brooklyn, spoke briefly with NJ Advance Media, having fielded call after call from family members and the media. She’s still trying to wrap her head around a public health crisis the magnitude of which has not been seen in a century.

It has torn the Fusco family apart.

They have suffered an inexplicable loss. And they cannot even find closure or solace for those they’ve lost in the early days of this crisis.

Days after the death of Fusco-Jackson, her mother, Grace Fusco, 73, of Freehold, and Fusco-Jackson’s brother, Carmine Fusco, of Bath, Pennsylvania, both died on Wednesday. Another brother, Vincent Fusco, 53, of Manalapan, died Thursday.

All but Carmine Fusco died at CentraState

SEE FAMILY, A5

More inside

Another surge in cases: New Jersey now has at least 742 known coronavirus cases statewide, including nine deaths, as officials announced 312 new positive tests Thursday. **A5**

Nursing homes: The death of a patient at a Montclair facility highlights an area of vulnerability in the pandemic. **A5**

TRANSPORTATION

NJ Transit asks feds for $1.25B as outbreak decimates ridership

Larry Higgs *For The Star-Ledger*

Facing a huge drop in ridership, NJ Transit officials have asked the federal government for a $1.25 billion bailout to make up for revenue losses and higher expenses to fight the coronavirus.

NJ Transit has experienced an 88% drop in ridership since March 9, said Nancy Snyder, a spokeswoman. More employees are working from home, resulting in light travel on NJ Transit trains, on the agency’s and private carrier buses, and on highways in the state.

Officials estimate the agency could lose as much as $1.25 billion by the end of fiscal year 2021, and faces additional expenses in the cost to expand disinfection and cleaning of “touch points” on trains and buses and at stations to prevent the spread of coronavirus, wrote Kevin Corbett, NJ Transit CEO and president, in a letter sent to the congressional delegation Thursday.

“Emergency federal funding is required, so that current programs for capital projects and state-of-good- repair funding are not cannibalized, at the expense of system safety and operations,” Corbett wrote. “NJ Transit also is requesting continued regulatory flexibility from our federal partners for critical project and grant deadlines and other mandates.”

Revenue from fares makes up more than 40% of NJ Transit operating budget.

New Jersey had 742 cases of coronavirus as of Thursday afternoon, and officials have encouraged people to work from home to “flatten the curve” and reduce the spread of the disease.

New York’s MTA took a similar step on Tuesday, asking that state’s congressional delegation for $4 billion in aid. The MTA cited in a press release ridership declines of 60% on the subways, 49% on buses, 90% on Metro-North and

SEE TRANSIT, A8

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Please stay safe. Follow the guidance from our federal, state and local officials. And stay informed by sticking with us in print, via email or text, and online at NJ.com/coronavirus.

Steve Alessi, Regional President/New Jersey Advance Media

ROME

Death toll in Italy overtakes China as coronavirus spreads

Nicole Winfield and Tim Sullivan *Associated Press*

Italy’s death toll from the coronavirus outbreak eclipsed China’s on Thursday as the scourge extended its march across the West, where the United States and other countries increasingly enlisted the military and improvised at every turn to get ready for the onslaught of patients.

In the U.S., the Army readied mobile military hospitals for deployment in major cities. In Madrid, a four-star hotel was turned into a hospital. Medical centers around the United States set up drive-thru testing sites that drew long lines of motorists waiting for nurses to swab their nostrils.

As the outbreak spread westward, it infected at least one European head of state: Monaco’s 62-year-old Prince Albert II, who continued to work from his office. And it appeared to be opening an alarming new front in Africa, where health care in many countries is already in bad shape.

At the United Nations in New York, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the world is “at war with a virus” and warned that “a global recession, perhaps of record dimensions, is a near certainty.”

“If we let the virus spread like wildfire — especially in the most vulnerable regions of the world — it would kill millions of people,” he said.

Italy, with 60 million citizens, recorded a total of at least 3,405 deaths, or roughly 150 more than in China — a country with a population over 20 times larger. At the same time Italy reached its bleak milestone, Wuhan, the Chinese city where the coronavirus first emerged three months ago, recorded no new infections, a sign that the communist country’s draconian lockdowns had worked.

SEE VIRUS, A6

SOCIAL DISTANCING

As young and dumb party on, the wise do spring break at home

Steve Politi *spoliti@njadvancemedia.com*

I haven’t found myself quoting Chris Christie often in my life, but there I was on Wednesday afternoon, shouting one of the former governor’s greatest hits:

“GET THE HELL OFF THE BEACH!”

I was yelling this at the TV. If you even spent a few minutes watching the newscast or browsing social media during the last 24 hours of our self-quarantine — and, let’s be honest, what else are we going to do? — you undoubtedly saw the viral videos from Florida that sent me into a rage.

The clips featured half-drunk college students, and lots of them, standing shirtless in some spring break destination like Daytona Beach or Miami while explaining that they weren’t the least bit worried about the coronavirus as it shut down all aspects of our lives.

“If I get corona, I get corona. At the end of the day, I’m not going to let it stop me from partying,” Danny Dipspit, his name changed to protect the stupid, said for the CBS cameras. “We’ve been waiting for Miami spring break for a while; about two months we’ve had this trip planned. We’re just down here having a good time. Whatever happens, happens.”

SEE POLITI, A4

Parenting in the COVID-19 era
When it comes to social distancing, should you let your kids interact with other kids? **A4**

Younger people also getting sick
A report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows more people under 50 are being affected than previously thought. **A6**

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